

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 18 2014
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
6:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: R. Johnson, C. Zuellig, H. Jugenitz, M. Bullard, P. Hollifield, N. Sandberg
S. Straley

Absent: A. Bedogne (excused)

Staff: Teresa Gillotti, Community Development Director
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary
Megan Minock – Consultant

Chairperson Johnson welcomed new members Nicki Sandberg and Scott Straley to the board.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 21, 2014

Commissioner Hollifield moved to approve the minutes of May 21, 2014 (Support: H. Jugenitz) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Capital Improvements Review

Ms. Gillotti gave some background information on this project. This presentation is for the pedestrian bridge and mid-walk crossing that connects Riverside Park up to the corner of the Honda Dealership, who have given the city an easement, and then have a pedestrian crossing on Michigan Avenue at grade that will connect to the Water Street Trail. We are not done yet on the planning of the Water Street Trail so we will do a Part Two of the Capital Improvement Review at a later meeting. MDEQ will not permit us to put a crossing under the bridge so we had to re-group and come up with a plan across the river but get up high enough to cross the

street. She introduced Chris Zangara from Mannik and Smith Group. He is the engineer for the project brought on by Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation who are providing the match for our grant.

Chris presented a detailed design plan and proposed location of the bridge and how it fits in to both Riverside Park over the Huron River, across Michigan Avenue and ends at the beginning of the Water Street Trail. He indicated the type and color of block that would be used on the masonry, i.e. Miami Buff. The bridge would be approximately 10' in width and 18' at the overlook points. The bridge will have an ADA accessible ramp. He also reviewed the location of the trail itself as well as discussing the possibility of a median and location of crosswalks on Michigan Avenue underneath the bridge.

Ms. Gillotti added that MDEQ approved the High Intensity Activated Cross Walk (HAWK) crossing, which is a pedestrian activated stop crossing that stops traffic in both directions to allow crossing. It would have an ADA ramp on sides, striping and a signal. Staff wanted the median to be more of an entrance to the park as well as the grade change on the hill and likes the idea of a median to slow traffic down. HAWK's are fairly new to MDOT; however, we got the location approved. Staff presented the median but the signal unit of MDOT didn't want the median because if a person is crossing in the middle, the signal would not work. The department that handles maintenance didn't want the median because they plan to repair the bridge in a few years and a median makes it more difficult to re-route traffic. Staff doesn't know if the crossing will get approval or not and the other important part is they will not approve property that impacts a property owner, referring to the property at Fischer Honda. We may end up with a very simple HAWK or a version with the median, which is staff's preference.

There were many questions on the project by board members including plantings, lighting, bump-outs, and potential zig-zags for bikes.

Planning Commission generally recommends the plan with some possible changes; consideration of bump-outs on the north side of Michigan Avenue to reduce crossing providing additional protection for pedestrians; additional plantings between the two towers and restoring the banks.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Zuellig (Support: P. Hollifield) to amend the agenda moving up Old Business – Bylaws & Elections – and by voice vote carried unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

At a previous meeting, it was clarified that the calendar year from January thru December would be used to determine the number of absences allowed by a member. Commissioner Zuellig moved that notification be made by staff to any member after two consecutive absences and/or after the third non-consecutive absence during a calendar year.

One board member asked if there was any appeal process due to legitimate absences and Ms. Gillotti responded that the Planning Commission notifies the City Council since they would be

the deciding body on whether or not a member could stay on the board. Commissioner Jugenitz supported the motion and the motion carried 6:1. Commissioner Hollifield opposed.

Elections were held and Chairman Johnson accepted the nomination for another year. Commissioner Zuellig moved to re-elect Chairman Johnson (Support: P. Hollified) and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Zuellig was nominated to continue the position of Vice-Chair, which she accepted. Commissioner Jugentiz moved to re-elect Commissioner Zuellig as Vice-Chair (Support: N. Sandberg) and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting reconvened at 7:07 p.m. Chairperson Johnson welcomed Mayor Schreiber and Council members, Murdock and Robb.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Angela Kline, 214 S. Grove – noted that currently her property, which is an old historic home built in the 1850's, is zoned industrial – she is asking that during the rezoning process, the board would consider zoning that allows residential.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Zoning ordinance revision presentation

Ms. Gillotti stated that staff has spent the last few months reviewing sections of the ordinance and they now have a single draft. She pointed out the use tables which include who has approval for site plans, PUD's, etc. i.e. planner, commissioners or city council. Rather than point out the list of changes, staff decided to focus on trying out on some sites – staff picked three sites to see what would have been allowed under the old ordinance and what would be allowed under the new ordinance – the first is 774 Harriet, next is a vacant lot on Washtenaw/Cortland and finally Central Neighborhood areas on Pearl Street. Ms. Gillotti introduced Megan Minock, ENP Consultant, who has previously been working on the Master Plan as well as in the office during Ms. Wessler's absence.

Ms. Minock stated that during the Master Plan process, staff reviewed the vision and predictability. Now we are in the process of taking on the vision and implementing it. She noted that there are currently 16 districts and 4 overlay districts existing in the city and the current zoning does not work. The new zoning ordinance allows for no overlay districts, eight form based districts and four use districts, for a total of 12 districts. Ms. Gillotti added that it is particularly problematic in the Historic District when we have a message that says we want to preserve the historic nature but not allow for a use that is permitted in that area – it sends a mixed message for our ordinance.

Chairman Johnson asked Ms. Minock to review the proposed 12 zoning districts prior to reviewing the three districts previously stated. She reviewed each of the proposed 12 districts giving the description and purpose of each as to what they were designed to allow and encourage in that particular district under the new zoning as well as comparing previous uses. She also indicated the various corridors and neighborhoods.

Ms. Minock reviewed the properties on Harriet, Washtenaw/Courtland and Pearl Street stating what is allowed on each of these properties as well as producing overhead drawings/pictures to detail all of the uses.

Commissioner Jugenitz stated that while she realized staff had put a lot of work into crafting the language to communicate these changes to the broader public, she suggested that on core neighborhoods, she would encourage staff to use “low density to high density” designation as a difference between each of the three core neighborhoods.

Chairman Johnson stated that it was his opinion regarding core neighborhoods – it is important the words “single family” be included. Commissioner Straley had some questions regarding on-street parking in core neighborhoods, which Ms. Minock addressed.

Ms. Gillotti stated that the next step is the roll out to the public, hold public hearings and finally adoption, which she hopes will be completed by the fall.

Chairman Johnson added that he thought the presentation was enlightening in that it gives the board better flexibility since there are times when people come before the board and it is their opinion that we are not being helpful in what they are trying to accomplish. While the board may not have the solution, they are doing the best they can.

Amanda Edmunds asked if there was any allowance for paving or solar and if this is something that needs to be regulated. Commissioner Zuellig also had questions on lot coverage and upzoning and wanted to be sure that we are very clear with the community on uses. Additionally, on communications with the public, Commissioner Jugenitz gave an example of a possible concern by someone stating that “if there was an existing commercial use in the area that someone wanted to maintain for commercial use but zoning would not allowed” how would this be resolved – this is a type of question that is practical and would be of interest to current owners and their ability to sell the property. Ms. Minock made a note to address this as staff goes back through the ordinance.

To wrap up, Ms. Gillotti is looking to get many comments from all the board members since there is a lot to think through and will be discussed further in July.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Request for Extension

a. 517-521 Tyler (Self Storage)

Commissioner Jugenitz moved that the Planning Commission approve an extension for 517-521 Tyler (Self Storage) for six months from the previous approval in light of the fact that they require additional time to submit plans to the Building Department (Support: N. Sandberg) and by voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

b. 615 E. Michigan Ave (Harmony House Motel)

Commissioner Jugenitz moved that the Planning Commission approve an extension for 615 E. Michigan (Harmony House) for six months from the previous approval in light of the fact that they require additional time to submit plans to the Building Department (Support: N. Sandberg) and by voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Non-Motorized Committee - The May and June meeting minutes were included in the packet.

XI. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION /UPDATES

1. Full Zoning Text & Map – Public Hearing

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Zuellig moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: H. Jugenitz) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.